MILL HOLLOW (OF LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO) : ITS TRUE HISTORY

compiled by the " *Brownhelm Township Historical Society*"* (2022)

[*- see the bottom of final page]

In '1976', a (very young?) "historian" – on behalf of the *Lorain County Metropolitan Park District* – submitted the following information about the "Mill Hollow House", for approval to be officially listed with the *National Register of Historic Places* :

1 NAME

HISTORIC ** Bacon, Benjamin, House

AND/OR COMMON The Mill Hollow House (Preferred)

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1845 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This small Greek revival structure is one of the last of its type in the area and as such, one of few that reflects the early architecture of the Firelands. The house has changed little since it was originally built and has been owned by the same family for over 100 years.

The house was constructed for Benjamin Bacon, one of the earliest settlersto migrate to this portion of the Firelands. Bacon was a county commissioner and a justice of the peace. This home served as his office for community affairs.

But, how much of that, was true?

(And, how much additional, noteworthy 'history' was carelessly omitted?)

This exposé will attempt to dispel some of the myths caused by prior "historians", and remedy its actual history –- with many well-known facts that were simply ignored.

Firstly – "*the early architecture of the Firelands*" is an odd statement, considering that this house – being in Brownhelm Township – was never in "the Firelands" (despite that this Township was, very briefly, likewise under the same official jurisdiction of old "Huron County" --- but, that was decades prior to the construction of this house). [Although it is pertinent to note, that IF the boundaries of the "Connecticut Western Reserve" had been complied-with, as granted --- precisely 120 miles westward from the Penn. State line --- then, indeed, this Township could have been within the *Fire Lands*. But the *Connecticut Land Company* rejected an initial survey – and, instead, ordered a second survey which blatantly exceeded the "120 mile" grant; and also resulted in the (misleading) designation of "*Surplus Lands*" (of about ten-thousand acres). (That intentional over-reach beyond 120 miles, is verified in original survey records, etc.)

{ Some readers may prefer to merely peruse the included photographs; or skip to the summary on the final page.}

One of the myths about "Mill Hollow", is concerning the (so-called**)** ***"Benjamin Bacon mills"*****. That myth seems to have stemmed from a statement presented in a mini-biography about "F.H." Frederick Bacon,**
(in an '1894' book "sponsored" by, and about, prominent local families**) :**

Benjamin Bacon, father of subject, was a native of Massachusetts, born in Old Stockbridge, whence in 1818 he came to Ohio, locating in Brownhelm township, Lorain county. He made the entire journey with a one-horse wagon, and had but four dollars in money when he arrived in Brownhelm. He made his settlement where William Bacon now lives, having bought wild land from one William Brown. In 1820 he erected a mill at what is known as "Mill Hollow," on the Vermillion river, and about 1835 enlarged it from a one-burr to a four-burr capacity. Ten years later he equipped it with modern improvements.

[*"**where William Bacon now lives**"*, refers to another large old farmhouse on North Ridge Rd.– but slightly east of "Mill Hollow" and Vermilion Rd. – that true "Benjamin Bacon House" (on "Twp. Lot 45") was built circa-1821, according to later Bacon-family descendants who still resided in it, in 1941. Benjamin Bacon likely acquired that land, from Henry (not "William") Brown**.]**

That '1894' bio indicated that Benjamin Bacon *"erected a mill"*, which misleadingly implies that he was the sole owner of that mill, (instead of only being involved with its construction, etc.).

A decades-earlier history (by theologian James Fairchild, in '1867' **) says this:**

The first flouring-mill was built by Judge Brown, in 1821, on the Vermillion [River] *, near the present Swift place.* [Gore-Orphanage Rd.] *After two or three years, it was removed down the river and placed by the side of a saw mill owned by Hinckley* [HIGLEY] *and Morse; and is the same mill* [site] *now owned by Benjamin Bacon".*

Fairchild therefore attributes the first grist-mill's ownership to Col. Henry Brown, (in '1821'). **(** And**,** *"Hinkley"*[Higley] and Morse, for the first saw-mill.**)**

Unfortunately*, Fairchild failed to specify, that (prior to Col. Henry Brown relocating his own gristmill structure from Swift's Hollow, circa 1824)
"Judge" Brown had actually acquired this '*mill-seat*' property
(in Mill Hollow **), from George Higley** (and Abishai Morse?)**.**

[*- causing the much-later "historians" to simply assume that Brown's mill structure had merely been re-utilized by new owners **---** thereby totally ignoring his obvious "Mill Hollow" ownership.]

'1825' property deed, denoting that Higley had previously sold the mill site to Henry Brown:

172 [[This deed-record transcribed in 1912 , from the County Recorder's hand-written copy. (See that Deed Volume's final page.)]]

To all before to whom these presents shall come. Greeting. Know ye That George Higley of Madison in the County of Geauga and State of Ohio in consideration of One hundred and eighty dollars paid by Roderick H. Robbins of Steuben in the County of Oneida and State of New York the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge do hereby grant, give sell and convey unto the said Roderick H Robbins his heirs administrators and assigns forever a certain piece of land in Brownhelm in the County of Lorain and State of Ohio being part of lot number fifty one in township number sixth in the nineteenth range in the Connecticut Western Reserve and is bounded as follows to wit, beginning at a Black Walnut Tree in the east line of said

173 lot, twenty-one chains, forty links from the south east corner, thence south eighty eight degrees west five chains sixty three links to the south bank of Vermillion River, thence north thirty one degrees west two chains sixty six links to a black oak tree, thence south seventy three degrees west three chains thirty six links to a stake, thence north thirty two degrees west nine chains twenty five links, thence south fifty one degrees west f fourteen chains seventy links, thence south thirty two degrees east five chains seventy five links thence, north sixty two degrees east four chains fifty links, thence south seventeen degrees east six chains seventy links, thence north fifty nine degrees east eighteen chains fifty links to the place of beginning, containing eighteen acres and twenty rods excepting however from this conveyance the land I have heretofore conveyed to Henry Brown to include his Mill dam and Race way and the privileges therewith conveyed to him.

To have and to hold the afforegranted premises to the said Roderick H. Robbins his heirs and assigns to his and their use and behoof forever And I do covenant with the said Roderick H. Robbins his heirs and assigns that I am lawfully seized in fee of the afforegranted premises that they are free of all incumbrances that I have good right sell and convey the same to the said Roderick H. and that I will warrant and defend the same premises to the said Roderick H. Robbins his heirs and assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of all persons . In witness whereoff I the said George Higley have hereunto set my hand and seal this 28th. day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty five.

Signed sealed and delivered & acknowledged and delivered in presence of

Elisha Belcher Jr. Saml. Wheeler George Higley (Seal)

This '1826' public-notice about a planned 'State' roadway, mentions "Brown's mill".
[This road would later become the "Detroit road" – including present-day N. Ridge Road (etc.).]

SANDUSKY (OH) CLARION -- 4 Nov 1826

Notice.

THE inhabitants of Huron, Lorain, and Cuyahoga counties, and all others interested, are hereby notified, that a petition, signed by inhabitants of said counties, will be presented to the next session of the Legislature of Ohio, for a grant to lay out and construct a State Road; to commence on the State Road lately laid out from the eastern termination of Maumee and Sandusky turnpike to Elyria, near Milan village; and to run from thence to Brown's mill on the Vermillion River; from thence to continue & cross Black River near Dimick's; & thence to the bridge near the mouth of Rocky River; thence to Cleaveland.

Oct. 1*st*, 1826. 20

And this item (from an '1876' series of Vermilion area history published in the "North Amherst" newspaper), also says that these mills were formerly owned by Brown:

one of our oldest pioneers, who lived in West Brownhelm, and was then working for Mr. Curtis, generally known as Deacon Curtis, who then owned the farm on the east side of the river opposite what was then called Brown's Mills, now Heymann's Mills. Leonard Brad-

[*"West Brownhelm"* was a later name of the village adjacent to "Mill Hollow".
(*"Deacon Curtis"* was Alva Curtis, whose house was atop the north side's hill.)]

This '1827' "tax-duplicate" indicates that Henry Brown was the owner of the '*mill seat* ' :

No 1 Brownhelm Township 6 in Range 19

Names	Lot &c	Acres	Value D	Horses	Value D	Nt Cattle	Value D	Amount with 6 pr Ct addis D
Brown Henry	23 S. pt	64	64					68
Same	24	114	182					193
Same	50 W. pt	[illegible]	[illegible]					[illegible]
Same	51 Millseat	5	50					53
Same	52 E. pt	153	344					365
Same	55 E. pt	73	91					96

And this "mortgage" shows that Brown was the sole owner of the mill property,
(when he was short-on-cash in '1828', and used this property for collateral on a loan):

To all people to whom these presents shall come Greeting Know Ye
That I Henry Brown of the township of Brownhelm County of Lorain and State
of Ohio in consideration of six hundred and fifty dollars paid by Elisha Taylor
L. 51 of Cherry Valley in the County of Otsego and State of New York the receipt where
A 5 of I do hereby acknowledge do hereby give grant sell and convey unto the said Elisha
Taylor his heirs and assigns forever a certain piece of land in Brownhelm aforesaid
Mtg. being part of lot number "fifty one" in township number six in the nineteenth range
of the Connecticut Western Reserve and is bounded as follows to wit beginning south
thirty nine degrees west fifteen links from the foot of a brace at the lower side of
Vermillion River Bridge, thence south thirty two degrees east fifteen chains ninety
five links to a Black Oak tree, thence south seventy three & west three chains thir
five links, thence north thirty two degrees west thirteen chains eighty five links to the
centre of the river, thence north thirty three degrees east three chains thirty
eight links to the place of beginning, containing Five acres more or less together

36 with the Mills and other buildings thereon standing To have and to hold

The available government records don't indicate who was actually operating the mills. (Col. Brown, himself, was not a "miller", by profession**). Various records indicate that George Higley still resided in this area, (** and therefore, during the 1820s, Higley likely continued to be involved with the mill's operations, here; along with his original co-partner, Abishai Morse**).**

In the 1830s, ostensibly Job C. Smith and his family operated these mills (and a sawmill, further down-river, near their *"village of Jasperville"***):**

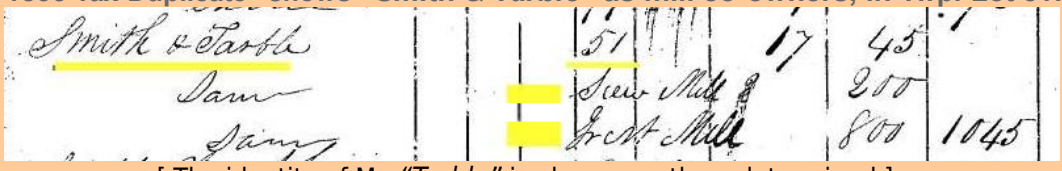
Job [pronounced "Jobe"] **C. Smith (**born 1786 in East Lyme CT; but later residing in Brighton, NY**), had arrived to this general area of Ohio, by 1816, (**when he was a co-owner and builder of the first grist-mill in Milan Twp.**). That same year, he married Elizabeth Austin (** the dau. of Capt. Wm. Austin, of Vermilion Twp.**). In 1819, Smith established the first saw-mill in Vermilion Twp., (**on Chapelle Creek**).**

By '1820', Smith and his family were enumerated as residents of Brownhelm Twp. -- and by '1825', he owned part of Twp.-Lots '34' and '47'. Subsequently, there (on Twp.-Lot 34 **) on the Vermilion River (** down-river from "Brown's Mills"**), he established a saw mill.**

Additionally, by '1832', Smith was denoted as being the new owner of the "Brown's Mills" property. (By '1836', ownership of the Smith saw-mill, down-river, had transferred to Job's son Wm. B.**)**

But, in '1839', he (allegedly) had become involved with a local counterfeit-money syndicate. And shortly later, he was accused of plotting the (attempted) assassination of another man who was also involved in that same scheme. (That man, whose last-name was, coincidentally, 'Cash' -- "*had turned State's evidence*" -- and was shot and wounded during the investigation of that counterfeiting-ring**.) The final legal-outcome of the Smith family's involvement, is currently undetermined. But by '1841' they had forfeited most of their property here,** (and, by 1850, were residing in DeKalb Co., Ind.).

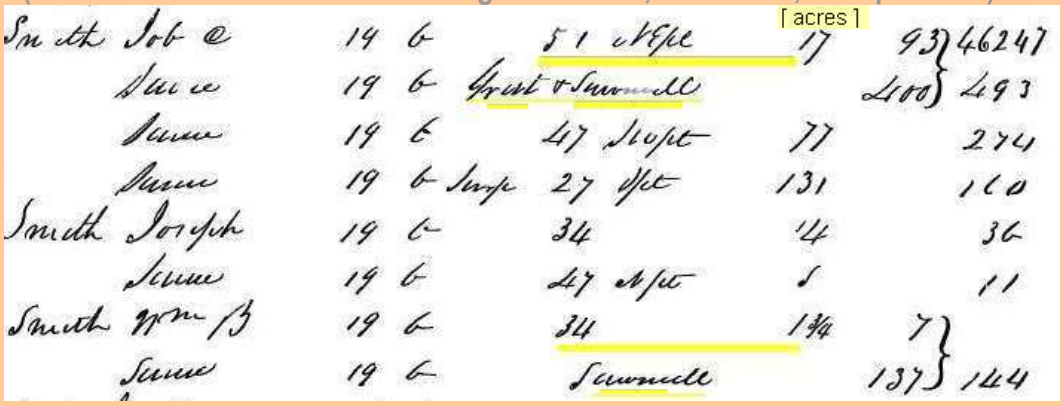
"1833 Tax-Duplicate" shows *"Smith & Tarble"* as mill co-owners, in Twp.-Lot 51:



Smith & Tarble			51	17	45	
Same			Saw Mill		200	
Same			Grist Mill		800	1045

[The identity of Mr. *"Tarble"* is also currently undetermined.]

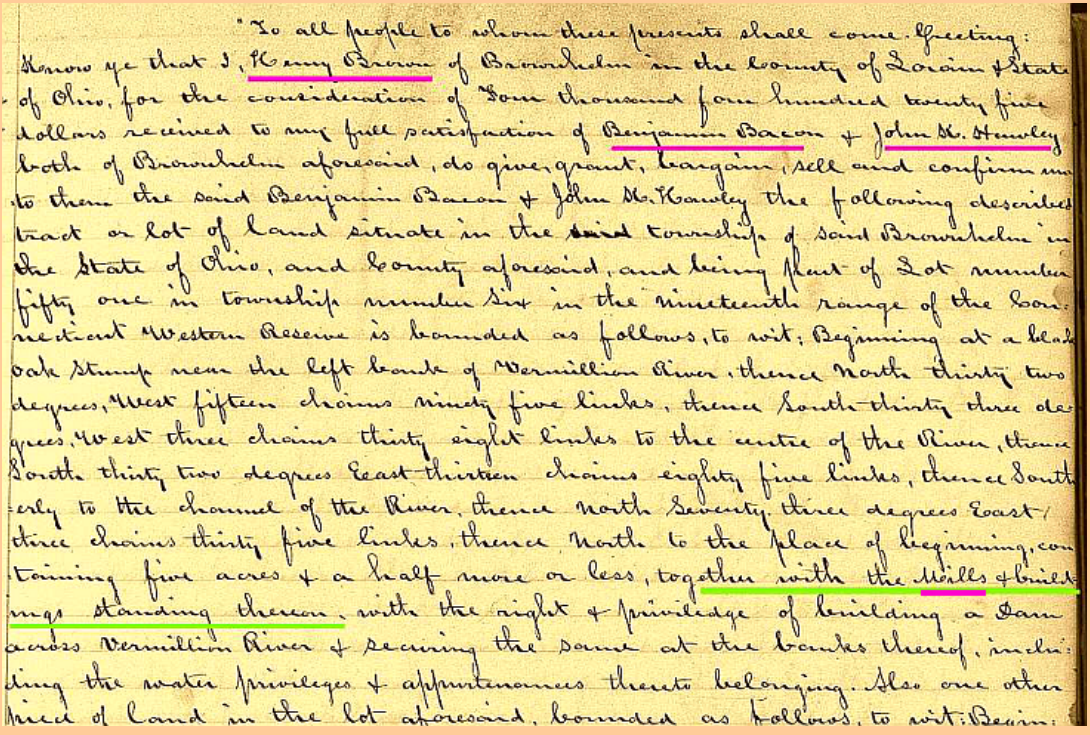
"1838 Tax-Duplicate" shows *"Job C. Smith"* owning the mills in Twp.-Lot 51;
(and his son *"Wm. B. Smith"* owning the sawmill, down-river, in Twp.-Lot 34):



					[acres]		
Smith Job C	19	6		51 N Pt	17	93	46247
Same	19	6		Grist & Sawmill		400	493
Same	19	6		47 S Pt	77		274
Same	19	6	Swp	27 Pt	131		160
Smith Joseph	19	6		34	14		36
Same	19	6		47 N Pt	5		11
Smith Wm B	19	6		34	1 3/4	7	
Same	19	6		Sawmill		137	144

[Also during the 1830s, that Smith family had 'platted' a village upon their property down-river, and named it *"Jasperville"*. However, merely one or two of its 99 village-lots had sold by '1839' --- and that "imaginary" village was never physically developed.]

Co-partnerships of actual mill operations, were common among many of the area's mills --- so it is certainly possible that Benjamin Bacon had a peripheral role in the operations of this grist-mill --- but Bacon was not an owner of the mill site, until '1843', when he and John K. Hawley, received the 'deed' to this mill property, (from [Judge / Col.] Henry Brown, who had apparently regained ownership after the Smith family's forfeitures**) :**

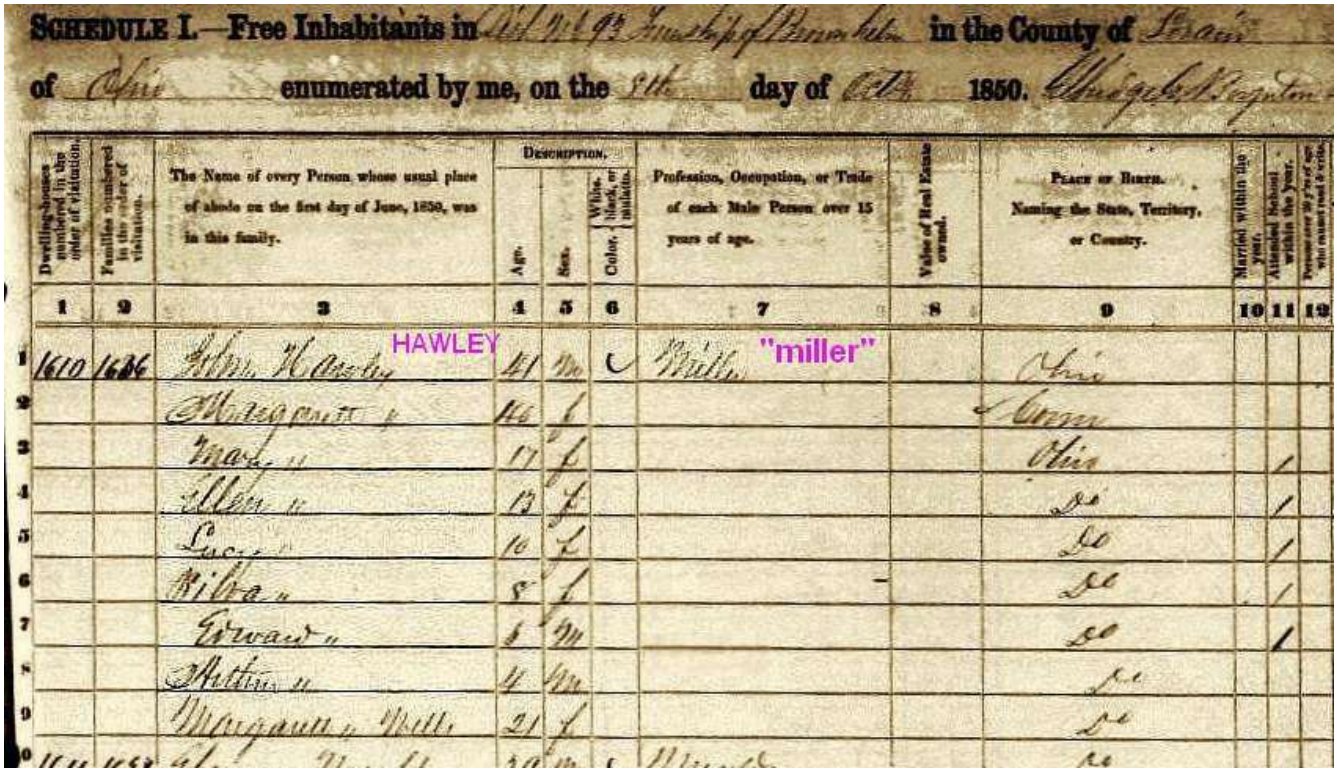


"To all people to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:
Know ye that I, Henry Brown of Brownhelm in the County of Lorain & State of Ohio, for the consideration of Four thousand four hundred twenty five dollars received to my full satisfaction of Benjamin Bacon & John K. Hawley both of Brownhelm aforesaid, do give, grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto them the said Benjamin Bacon & John K. Hawley the following described tract or lot of land situate in the ~~said~~ township of said Brownhelm in the State of Ohio, and County aforesaid, and being part of Lot number fifty one in township number Six in the nineteenth range of the Connecticut Western Reserve is bounded as follows, to wit; Beginning at a black oak stump near the left bank of Vermillion River, thence North thirty two degrees, West fifteen chains ninety five links, thence South thirty three degrees, West three chains thirty eight links to the centre of the River, thence South thirty two degrees East thirteen chains eighty five links, thence Southerly to the channel of the River, thence North Seventy three degrees East three chains thirty five links, thence North to the place of beginning, containing five acres & a half more or less, together with the Mills & buildings standing thereon, with the right & privilege of building a Dam across Vermillion River & securing the same at the banks thereof, including the water privileges & appurtenances thereto belonging. Also one other piece of land in the lot aforesaid, bounded as follows, to wit: Begin:

And, it was (supposedly) very shortly later, when the (so-called) *"Benjamin Bacon House"* was constructed near the mills --- but it is not known what evidence was utilized for 'dating' that construction --- nor evidence of when (or if) Benjamin Bacon ever truly resided in that house.

(But, note that any structure erected "circa-1845", on this property, technically and legally would ostensibly have been **co-owned** by **HAWLEY & BACON**.)

The '1850' U.S. Federal Census indicates the likely operator of this flouring-mill :



SCHEDULE I.—Free Inhabitants in Del. Twp. 9 Township of Brownhelm in the County of Lorain of Ohio enumerated by me, on the 8th day of Oct. 1850. Wm. Geo. Wagstaff

Dwelling-houses numbered in the order of visitation.	Families numbered in the order of visitation.	The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.	Description. Age.	Sex.	Color, white, black, or mulatto.	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.	Value of Real Estate owned.	Place of Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Married within the year.	Attended School within the year.	Persons over 20 yrs of age who cannot read & write.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1610	1606	John K. Hawley (HAWLEY)	41	M	C	Miller ("miller")		Ohio			
		Margaret "	40	f				Conn			
		Mary "	17	f				Ohio		/	
		Ellen "	13	f				do		/	
		Lucy "	10	f				do		/	
		Riba "	8	f				do		/	
		Edward "	6	M				do		/	
		Arthur "	4	M				do			
		Margaret Wells	21	f				do			
1611	1607	[illegible]	20	M	[illegible]	[illegible]		do			

[In contrast, Benjamin Bacon is listed as a "farmer", and residing elsewhere in Brownhelm Twp., 1850.]

Some biographical information about John K. Hawley (and his family) :

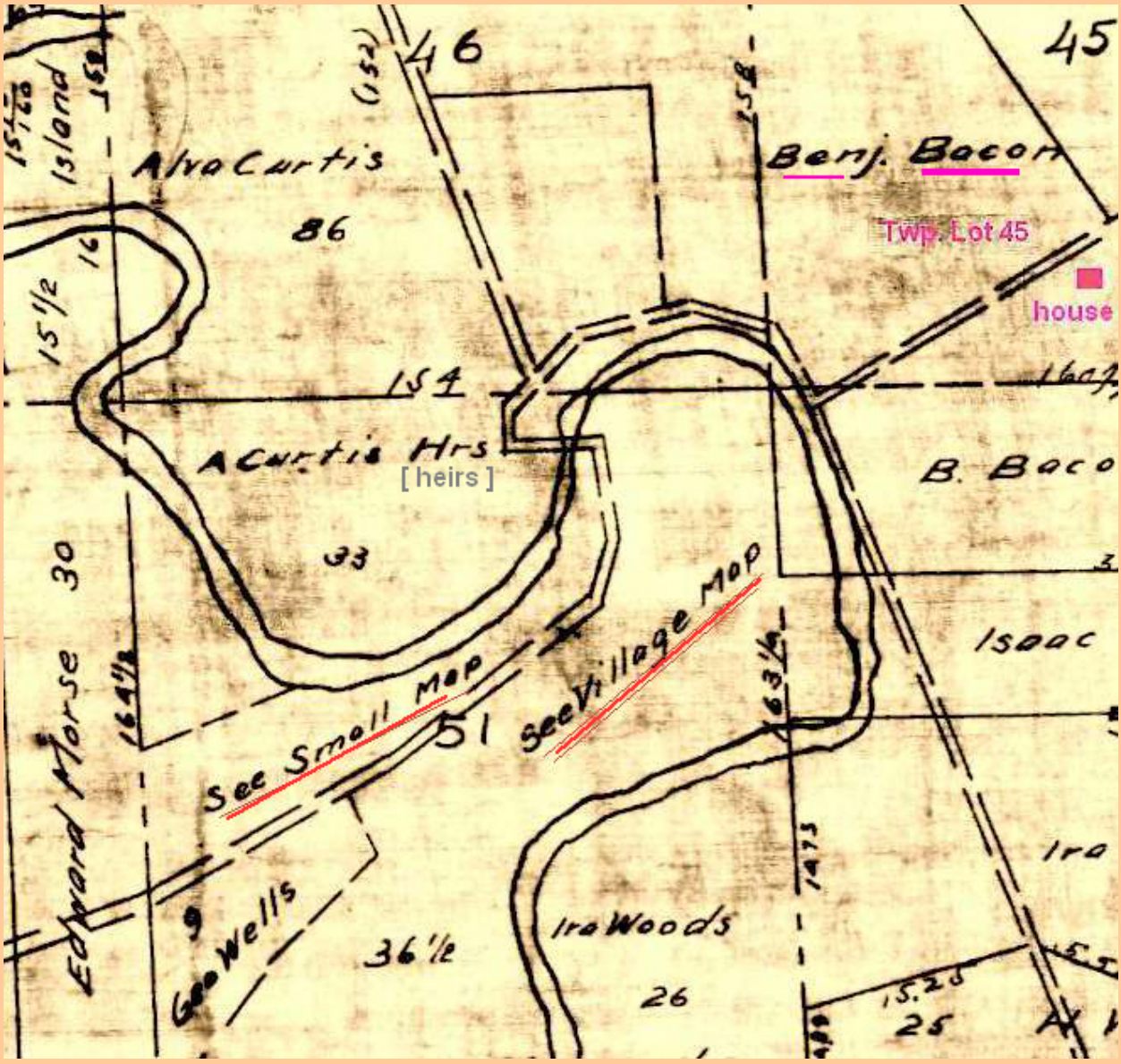
John K. HAWLEY was born in 1807, at Jefferson, Ashtabula Co., Ohio. In 1831, he married Margaret H. WELLS. She was born in 1808, at Hartford CT. "*She came to Brownhelm in 1820*", (per her obituary). [Margaret was apparently the sister of Julia Wells (1798-1860). Julia Wells had married Rensselaer COOLEY --- but after the death of Julia Cooley (and the death of John K. Hawley), Margaret married her sister's widower, Rensselaer Cooley. **Benjamin BACON**'s third wife, Mrs. Ann (WELLS) GRAHAM, was reportedly another sister of Julia (WELLS) COOLEY and of Margaret (WELLS) HAWLEY-COOLEY. **Therefore, John K. Hawley was Benjamin Bacon's brother-in-law.**

And, (if all of that isn't confusing enough) --- **Frederic H. Bacon (** Benjamin's son **) married Abbie Wells, who was the daughter of George Wells.** George Wells was said to be the brother of Julia, Margaret, and Ann. **Ann** was Frederic's mother. Therefore, ostensibly, Fred's wife, Abbie, was his own "first-cousin". ("First-cousin" marriages were later prohibited in 31 U.S. States, including Ohio.)]

John K. Hawley died in 1858; and Margaret (Wells) Hawley-Cooley died in 1883.

- Their sons, Edw. and Arthur, were Civil-War soldiers, (one being "*on gate guard* " for President Lincoln).
- One of the 'Hawley' daughters, Lucy – who was *"born in Mill Hollow"* in 1839 – married Henry B. Lindsley.
  (The 'LINDSLEY' name was well-known in the Brownhelm area, into the 20th-century. But the 'HAWLEY' name seems to have been virtually – and oddly – forgotten --- by prior "local-historians", at least.)
- Another 'Hawley' daughter, Celia, married Edwin H. Bacon – who was another cousin of F.H. Bacon.
  (Burt Shotton – pro-baseball-player in 1909-1923 – was, thereby, a great-grandson of J.K. Hawley.)

CIRCA THE YEAR '1851', THE VILLAGE OF "MANCHESTER" WAS PLATTED*, HERE :



[*- That "1851 Tax Map" doesn't denote the name of this village; but it is denoted as "Manchester" on the '1857' map. Therefore it was probably originally 'platted' by that name. **(** The notation *"See Village Map"* obviously refers to a separate plat-map – but perhaps which later was never preserved by the Lorain County Recorder.) A possible clue about the reason for that name**:** in '1843', John Curtis (son of Alva) had visited Manchester, England, (and, incidentally, as a result of that trip, became interested in 'silk' production, which he attempted here, but failed).

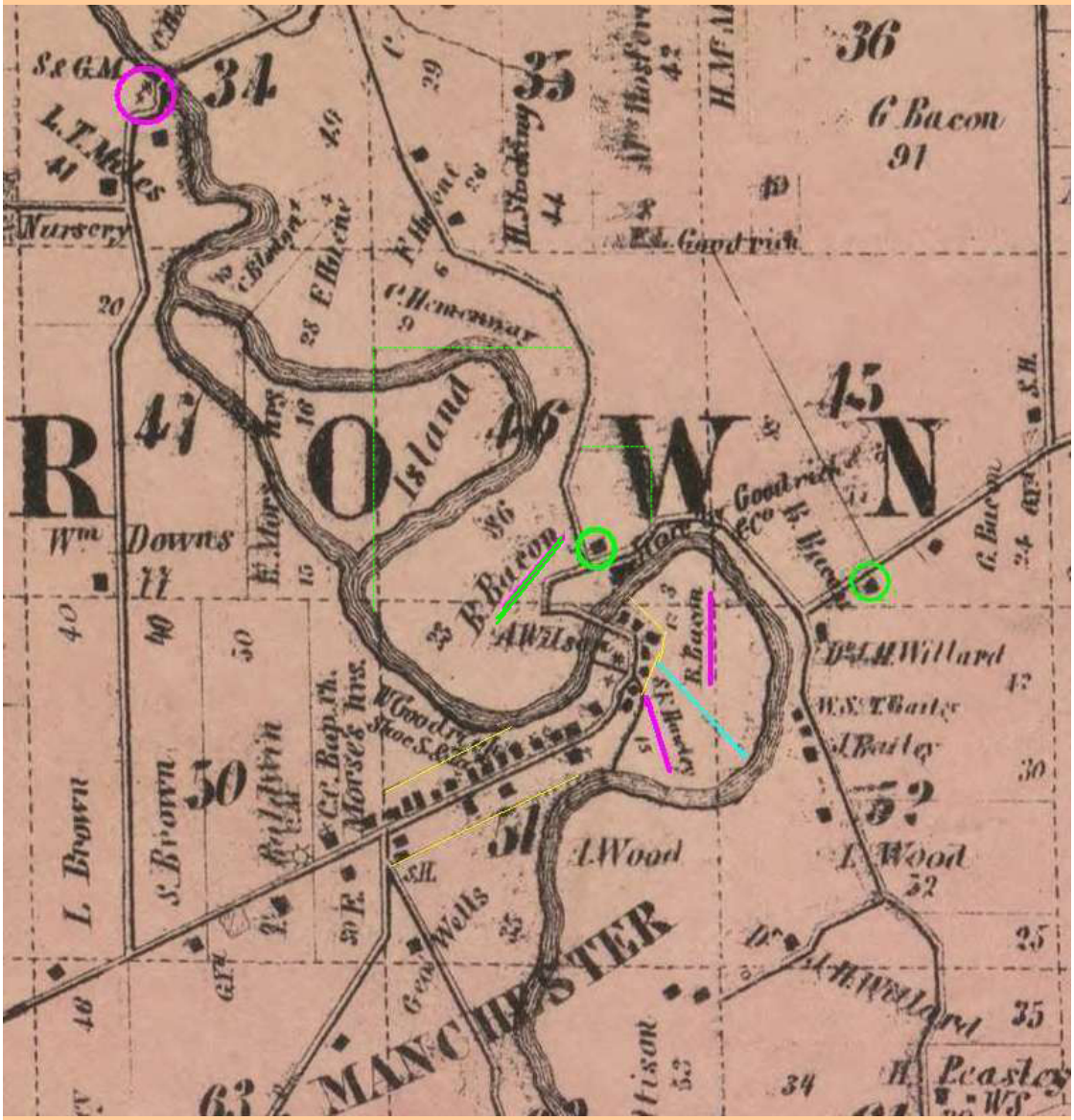
These village lots were officially known as "Sub Lots" (as per tax records of the eventual ownership of some of these various "Sub Lots"). There were **27** of these village "**Sub Lots**" -- of which, **# 2** and **# 3** encompass **the mills.** (See the '1874' "village map", on a further page.)

Perhaps a future separate booklet could be devoted just to the history of this "lost" village, (later known as 'Brownhelm Mills'; and subsequently 'West Brownhelm', and "Rugby P.O.").

{ The big "miller's house" in "the Hollow", doesn't seem to have actually been on a numbered "Sub Lot". But, regardless, until at least '**1852**', that specific homesite was still co-owned by " **Bacon & Hawley** ".}

[The approx. location of the true, original, home of Benjamin Bacon – on Twp. Lot 45 – is newly denoted at the upper right-hand corner.]

THE '1857' MAP SHOWS SEVERAL CHANGES OF LAND-OWNERSHIP :



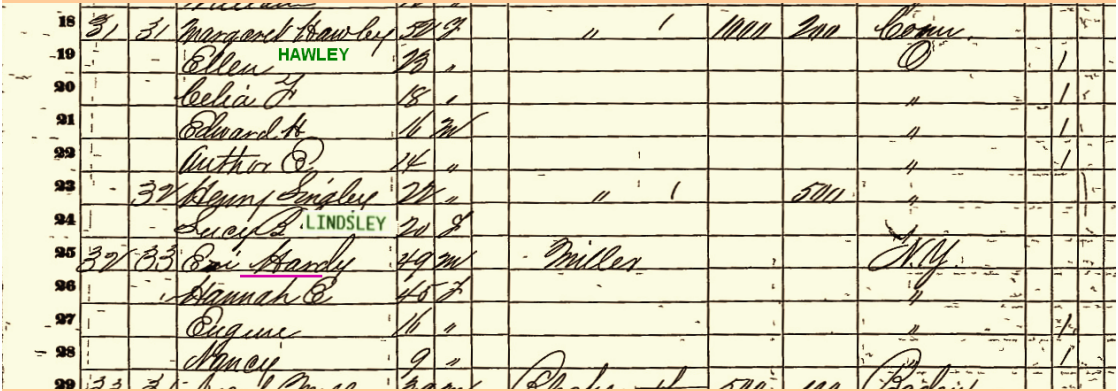
OWNERSHIP CHANGES SINCE 1851:

- **BACON & HAWLEY have split the co-ownership of their "bottomland" acreage** **(** likewise confirmed by deed-transfers filed in **'1852'** at the Lorain Co. courthouse).
[The resulting dividing-line between their properties, is newly highlighted there, in ' blue '.]
- **Benjamin Bacon has purchased the old Alva Curtis farm, which includes the old Alva Curtis house (** newly circled, there, in 'green'**). (But, additionally, Bacon still owns his original house, "east" of Mill Hollow (** also newly circled in 'green'**).**
- **"A. Wilson" is shown as owner of the small "Sub Lot" just north of the mills.**
(Presumably, **Asa Wilson**, enumerated as being a local "miller" in the '1850' census**;** and whose son, Samuel, married Mary Hawley, dau. of J.K. and Margaret, in '1855'.)

That village's survey-boundaries are newly (2022**) highlighted in 'yellow'.**
(Taxation records suggest that most of those two-dozen structures within that village, were erected between 1851-1856.) Also notice a schoolhouse (*"S.H."*) at the far s.w. corner of the village. (A later schoolhouse was built in the "triangle" lot, across the road.)

- **The other, "downriver", sawmill and gristmill, (** "*S & GM*" **) in Twp. Lot 34, has been purchased by Lewis T. Miles, (** from **Eri Hardy,** who had owned them in the 1840s, after the "legal-troubles" of the prior owners, the Job C. Smith family**).**

AFTER JOHN K. HAWLEY DIED IN 1858 -- THE '1860' CENSUS DENOTES THE NEW ***"miller"***, **Eri Hardy** – RESIDING ADJACENT TO THE HAWLEY FAMILY:



Additionally in the early-1860s, Eri Hardy is listed in personal-property tax records, here --- but not as being a landowner, here, during that same time. Therefore, Eri Hardy had undoubtedly become the main operator of the Hawley (& Bacon) gristmill, (potentially until '1864', after Margaret Hawley had sold the Hawley 'share' of the mill property, and perhaps moved out of "the Hollow"**).**

Frederick Bacon and his father, Benjamin, were instead both denoted as being *"farmers"* in that '1860' census. Their positioning in the enumeration-order* of that same census, suggests that they were residing together, in the house formerly owned by Alva Curtis, (across the road from the "Goodrich Tavern"**).**

[Other '1860' census enumeration-order, (in conjunction with '1857' map data), suggests that Benjamin's son, William Bacon, was then residing (with his own wife and children) in the true, original "Benjamin Bacon House" east of "the Hollow".]

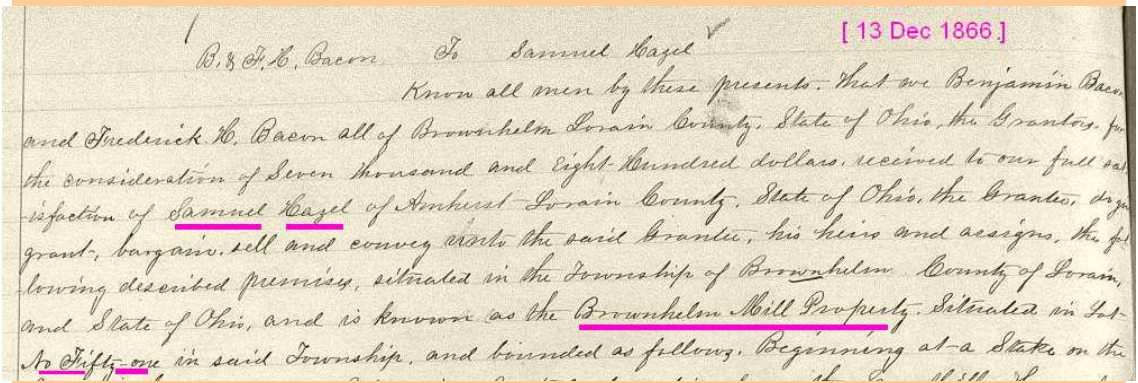
(Both of those 'Bacon' homes are newly circled on the '1857' map on the prior page.)

[*- Each Federal census was basically enumerated door-to-door --- and therefore it is often easy to see which households lived adjacent to each other – and within a specific neighborhood – based upon census groupings of families, in conjunction with property-ownership records of the same basic time-period. (The '1830' census is an exception – its later 'transcription' is in alphabetical-*ish* order.)]

{But, census records are not the only evidence of the true homes of the Bacon family.}

When Margaret Hawley sold the Hawley 'share' of the mill property, in November of 1864, to Frederick ("F.H.") Bacon, these mills were known as the "Brownhelm Mills" --- co-owned by "F.H." and his father, Benjamin.

However, Benj. and F.H. only retained (co-)ownership of the mill property for two years, (until '1866'), when they (both) sold to Samuel Hazel.



[13 Dec 1866]

B. & F. H. Bacon To Samuel Hazel

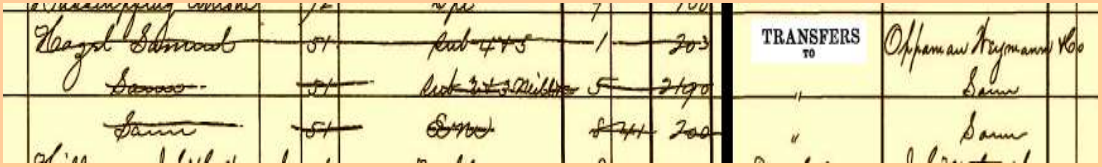
Know all men by these presents: That we Benjamin Bacon and Frederick H. Bacon all of Brownhelm Lorain County, State of Ohio, the Grantors, for the consideration of Seven thousand and Eight Hundred dollars, received to our full satisfaction of Samuel Hazel of Amherst Lorain County, State of Ohio, the Grantee, do grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Grantee, his heirs and assigns, the following described premises, situated in the Township of Brownhelm County of Lorain, and State of Ohio, and is known as the Brownhelm Mill Property. Situated in Lot No Fifty-one in said Township, and bounded as follows: Beginning at a Stake on the

A history ('1893') of Iroquois Co., Illinois, says this about Samuel HAZEL,
(born 1825, near Fredericksburg, OH, and later resided in Ashland Co., etc.) **:**
"Until 1866, he farmed in Van Wert County, when he went to North Amherst, Lorain County, Ohio, and purchased a combined steam grist-and-saw mill. There he remained two years, carrying on business in that line", (after which, he left Ohio and moved to Illinois**).** (The '1879' Lorain County history refers to his mill in "North Amherst" village, as the "*Hazel & Thompson mill* ", on Church Street.)

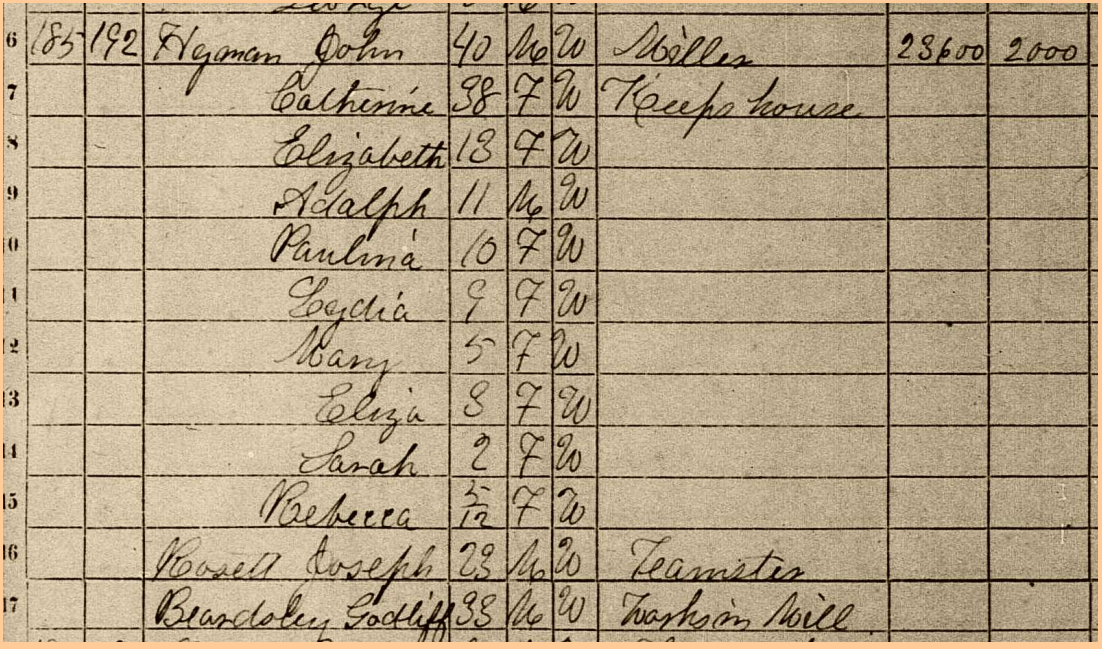
Some evidence suggests that Frederick Bacon continued to assist with the "Brownhelm Mills" while this property was owned by Hazel, (which is plausible, since HAZEL was probably busy operating his other mills in "North Amherst" village)**.**
But, "theologian" Fairchild's '1867' history is incorrect, by indicating that Benjamin Bacon still owned these mills at that time. (Especially because all contemporaneous evidence indicates that Benjamin was never the sole-owner.**)**

{ Incidentally, Benjamin Bacon died in 1868. His wife*, Anna (Wells) Graham-Bacon died in 1875. [She was his 3rd wife; and formerly the wife of John Graham.] **}**

In '1868', Samuel Hazel sold these mills (and the adjacent "Sub Lots") to "Opperman, Heymann and Company" (as shown in this '1868' tax-duplicate**):**

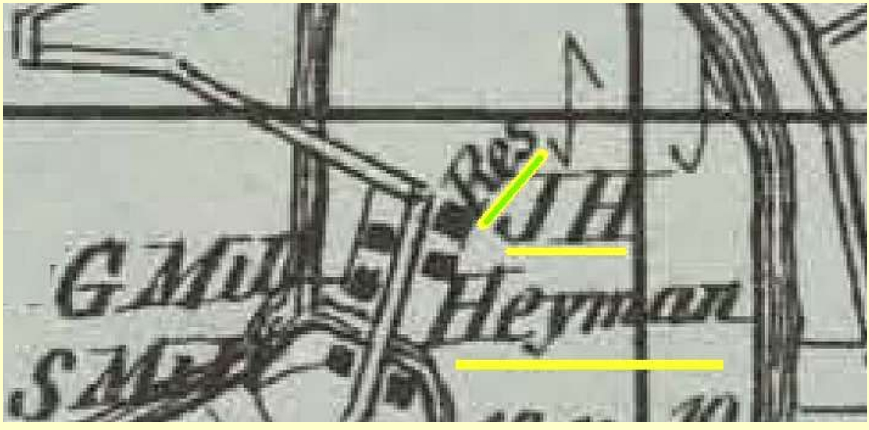


And in '1869', the ownership was transferred solely to <u>John Heymann</u>.
He is denoted as being the *"miller"*, in the '1870' census of Brownhelm Twp. :
(Notice how many household members were residing with him.)



6	185	192	Heyman John	40	M	W	Miller	23600	2000
7			Catherine	38	F	W	Keeps house		
8			Elizabeth	13	F	W			
9			Adalph	11	M	W			
10			Paulina	10	F	W			
11			Lydia	9	F	W			
12			Mary	5	F	W			
13			Eliza	8	F	W			
14			Sarah	2	F	W			
15			Rebecca	5/12	F	W			
16			Hosell Joseph	23	M	W	Teamster		
17			Beardsley Godliff	33	M	W	Works in Mill		

<u>The precise location of their residence, is clearly identified on an '1874' map</u>:



<u>That residence is, of course, the existing old "miller's house" in Mill Hollow</u>.

(But see the precise location of the F.H. Bacon residence, '1874', on a further page**.)**

FIRST – THE FLOOD ….

The Elyria Democrat.
Wednesday, Feb. 19, 1873.

BROWNHELM.

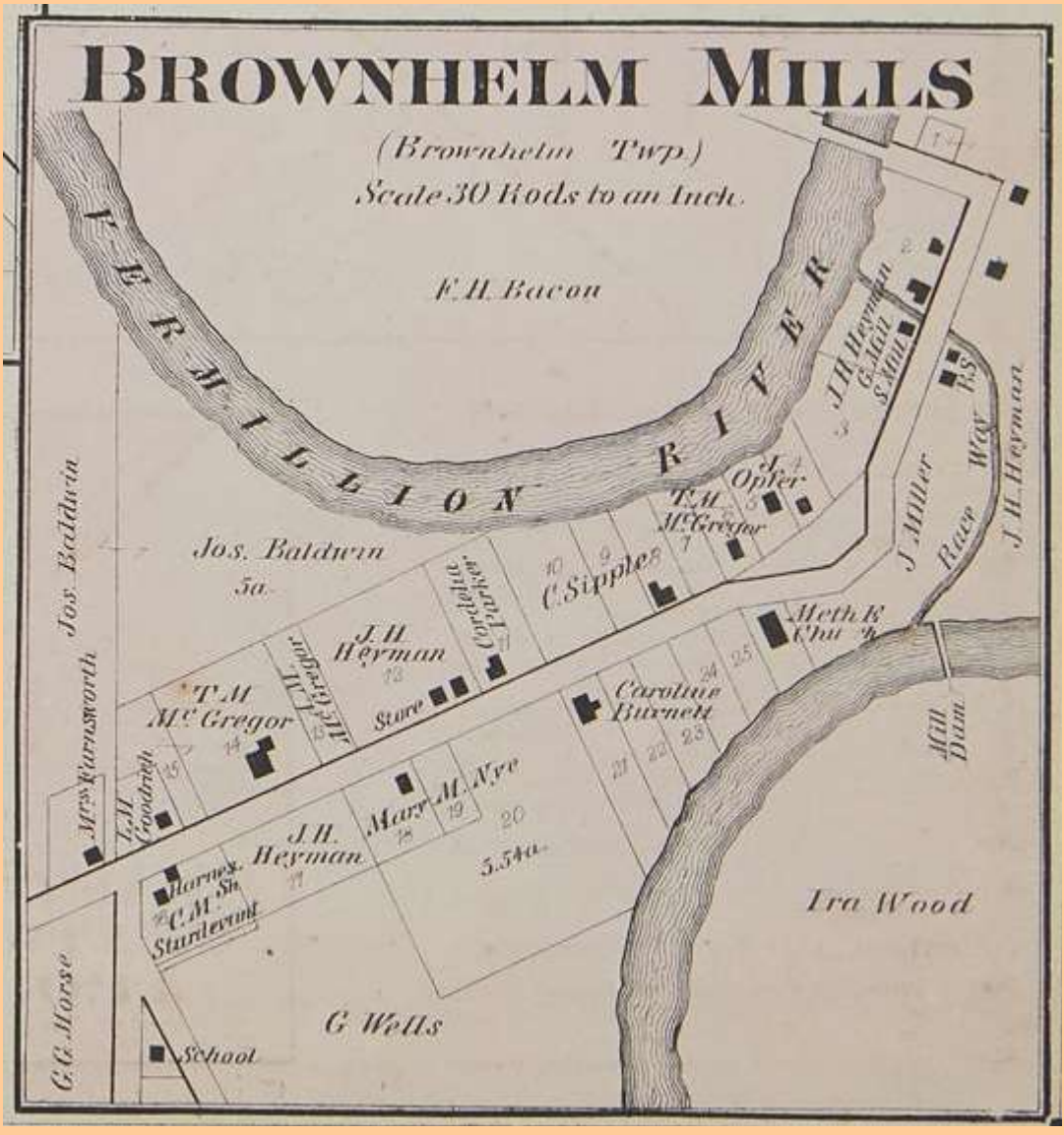
ICE GORGE.

These few last warm days started the ice in Vermillion river, just above the Brownhelm mills, or what some call horse-shoe bend. Ice and water came down, but scorning to take the old path, (the bed of the river), cut cross-lots, through meadows, orchards and gardens, carrying with it corn houses, pig pens, out-houses, fences and logs. It undermined the steam works of the grist mill, resting the tall smoke stack against the main part.

It was feared the new iron bridge would go; but fortunately the water found a passage under the ice below, and so passed off leaving the ice in huge piles in places, and on an average five feet deep. One orchard is a sight to see: ice piled up in the lower limbs of the trees. The inhabitants had to move onto higher ground; it is hard to tell what the effect will be of their rising so suddenly in the world. Water came into their houses 18 inches deep on the first floors, cellars were flooded, potatoes, apples, canned fruit and pork floating about permiscously.

[Notice the reporter's attempt at humor, (*"rising so suddently in the world"*).]

THE '1874' MAP OF THE VILLAGE OF 'BROWNHELM MILLS' ILLUSTRATES THOSE RESIDENCES WHICH WERE MOST AFFECTED BY THAT '1873' FLOOD.



J.H. Heymann was obviously the most affected --- especially because he and his large family, (and also some of his employees – as per the '1870' census**), were all occupants of the big "miller's house".** (Their residency in that specific house, is recorded on the '1874' map of the 'Township'.)

Jacob Miller (the village's blacksmith **) and his family, were also residing "in the Hollow".** (His house and blacksmith-shop, *"B. S."*, are shown as being directly across from the sawmill, and alongside the mill's *"Race Way"*.)

The occupants of the small* house between J. Miller's blacksmith-shop and the Heymann's big "miller's house", are unidentified. (Maps of this type, usually only denote ' land-owners ' -- not renters, such as the occupants operating a "*Store*" on Heymann's sub-lot "12" --- possibly being *"Lindsley, Wood, and Peck"*, listed in the '1874' *"Brownhelm Mills Business Directory"*.**)**

[* - an '1879' artist's sketch of that smaller house, shows it being merely a 'single-story'. (certainly not a suitable residence for any of the mill's various owners and co-owners).]

Notice village sub-lot ' 1 ' (east of the bridge). **It no longer had any structures shown upon it.** (The '1857' map shows two structures there. So perhaps those two structures were permanently damaged by the flood.) [In 1841-1858, Ezekiel Goodrich owned that 'lot'. (More, later, about the several 'lots' and structures Goodrich owned here.)]

..... THEN, THE FIRE !

THE [ELYRIA] CONSTITUTION
October 26, 1876

The Fire in Brownhelm.

Shortly after nine o'clock last Saturday night, the citizens of Mill Hollow, Brownhelm township, were startled by the alarm of fire which proved to be the large flouring and saw mills belonging to Mr. John Heymann which were on fire and in a short time the whole building was enveloped in flames. Every possible effort was made by the citizens to stay the progress of the flames, but proved of no avail. Fifteen or twenty barrels of flour was all that could be saved. The fire was first discovered on the second floor and is supposed caught from the friction of the machinery. Mr. Steverson was in possession of the mill, having rented it since the first of April, and had previously run it for several years under Mr. Heymann. He had just shut down and started for home when the fire was discovered. The loss will be severely felt by Mr. Heymann, as well as all the patrons and Mr. Steverson who controled it, although partially insured as follows, on buildings in the Ætna $4000, Phoenix $1250, Amazon $1500 and Meriden $1250; Total on buildings $8000. Steverson holds a policy of $1000 on stock. The stock burned as near as could be estimated is, wheat 400 bushels, corn 400, oats 300, bran 15 tons and feed 4 tons, besides a stock of flour. The machinery is a total wreck. It contained 3 run of stones and had a capacity for storage of about 10,000 bushels. The mill was built by Benjamin Bacon about 57 years ago and has been in constant use ever since and had a first class reputation for doing good work. The whole property was purchased about 7 years ago at $21,000 by Mr. Heyman who rebuilt the same at a cost of about $6,000. The above facts were ascertained by your correspondent visiting the ruins.

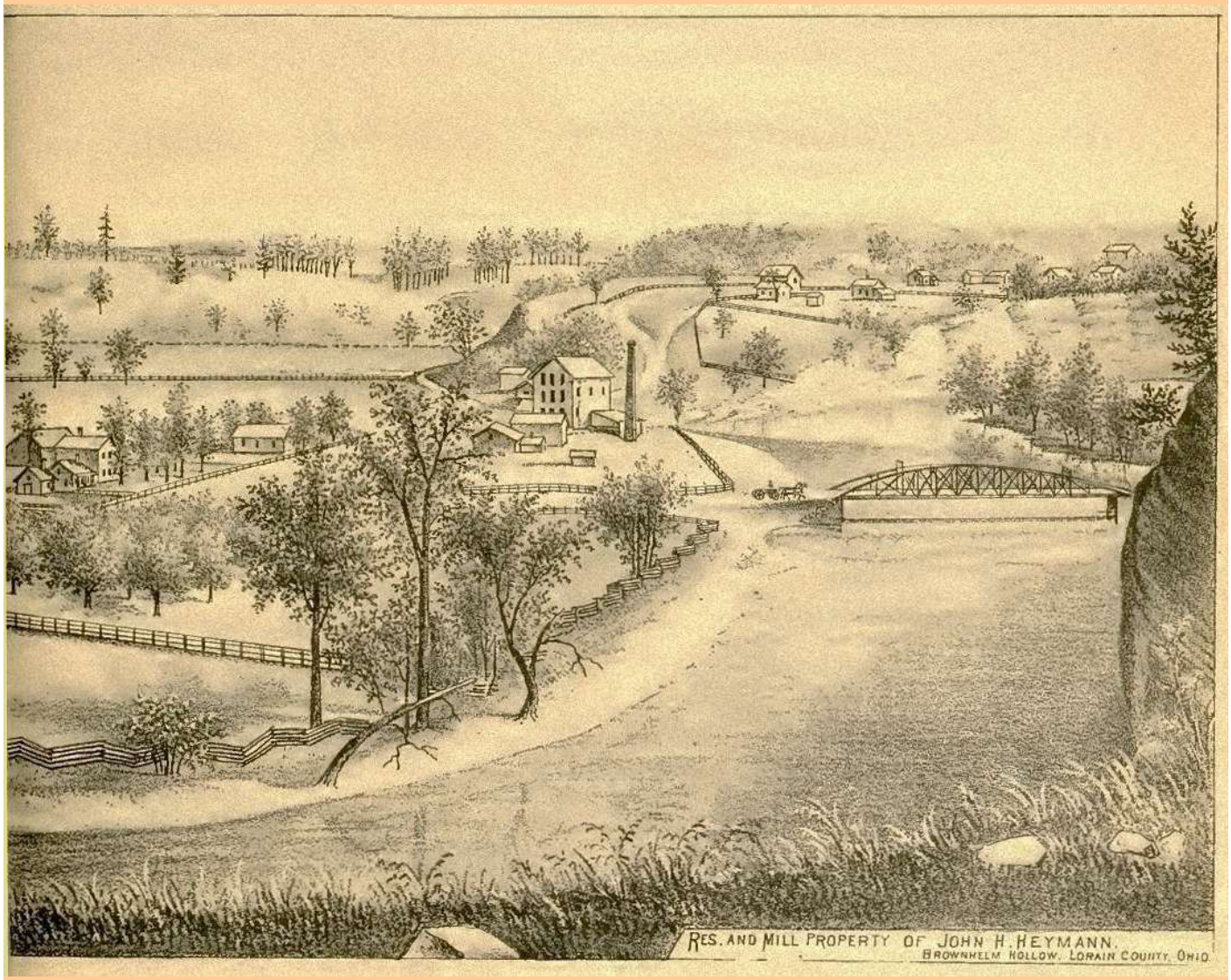
That news item (which mentions Benjamin Bacon as the "builder" **) was probably another source of the later historians' misconceptions about the true (and various) ownership of these mills.**

(That mill operator, Mr. *"Steverson"*, was John Stevenson, a local mill-wright, who previously was involved with mills in the village of Birmingham, upriver.)

BUT – ABOUT A YEAR LATER – THE MILLS WERE FULLY REBUILT.

(as described here, in an '1879' history)

"There is now - Fall of 1878 - one grist mill in the township. This is the mill of John H. Heyman, called the "Brownhelm Mills", situated in West Brownhelm, on the Vermillion. The mill was erected by the present owner, in the Fall of 1877, at a cost of some fifteen thousand dollars. There are three run of stones, beside a middlings stone. The mill is usually run by water power, but an engine has been added for use in dry seasons. The new process, called the "steaming process", is adopted in the manufacture of flour, which consists simply of steaming the wheat about six hours before grinding. About three hundred barrels of flour are now shipped per week, the principal market for which is Cleveland. It is one of the best establishments of the kind in this section of country. Mr. Heyman also has, in connection with his grist mill, a saw mill."



Included in that same book, was this artist's sketch of "Brownhelm Hollow",

(as viewed from atop the north cliff, and a very short distance east of the old "Goodrich Tavern").

[The river bridge had been installed circa-1872, (according to the "1873 flood" news).]

Notice the (re-named) village of ' *West Brownhelm* ' at the top of the south hill. (Also notice the divided roadway there --- one side being a more-gradual incline, for the heavily-loaded wagons.)

{ And note that the artist accurately spells "Heymann".}

..... THEN, THE THIEF ?

Amherst Free Press June 13, 1879

—It becomes our unpleasant duty to report the financial embarrassment of J. H. Heymann Esq., who is the owner of the Brownhelm and one of the Amherst flouring mills. The facts are these: about two weeks ago Mr. Heymann desiring some money sent his clerk Jacob Opperman, to Cleveland, to collect; the clerk has not yet returned and constant search does not reveal his whereabouts. Mr. H—. finds that he is short of funds in the neighborhood of $4,000 or $5,000, which money has been collected by Opperman for his own special benefit. Mr. Heymann has sold his Brownhelm mills to to F. H. Bacon of that place. Sheriff Corning, by order of a creditor, (Philo Sperry, of Vermillion), closed the grist mill in this place, on Wednesday evening. It is reported on the streets to-day (Thursday) that a meeting of the creditors is to be held at Mr. Heymann's house Thursday afternoon. It is greatly regretted by Mr. H's scores of friends that he is going to be driven to the wall and it is hoped he may be able to so compromise that he can resume operations.

Later.— A special to the Leader from Sandusky states that Opperman was arrested at that place on Wednesday: he pleads not guilty and is locked up in county jail.

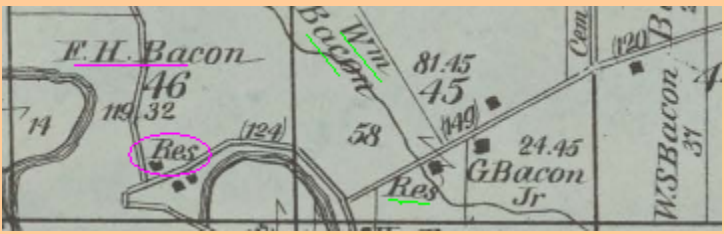
{ *"Amherst"* was the Township - its villages were 'North Amherst' and 'South Amherst'.}
[*"closed the gristmill in this place"* refers to Heymann's 'North Amherst' mill]

That incident's outcome is not yet researched -- but the sale of the *Brownhelm Mills* was probably already arranged somewhat prior to that (alleged) theft.
(Heymann officially transferred his ownership to F.H. Bacon – for $15,000 – on June 7th. But earlier 'news', in April, indicates that Heymann was planning an Amherst residency.)

Although F. H. Bacon had become the sole owner of this property in '1879' --- however, the '1880' census of Brownhelm Twp. indicates that John H. Stevenson is still this neighborhood's "miller".

(But – according to that census-order – the Stevenson family is residing on their village-lot #12.) (Stevenson had previously purchased that sub-lot '12' from Heymann in 1877; and upon which, the Stevenson family – and Charles Sunshine – were also operating the old general-store, there.**)**

And despite F. H. Bacon also becoming the sole owner of the big "miller's house in the Hollow" --- but he and his (now large) family, ostensibly, were still residing in the very large "Alva Curtis house",
(as had likewise been specifically recorded on the *' Township '* map, '1874' **):**



[In **'1867'**, F.H. Bacon had purchased the old "**Goodrich Tavern**" Inn, (directly across the road from the old "Alva Curtis house" which was then occupied by his parents, Benjamin and Ann Bacon). (Benj. died in 1868; Ann died in 1875.)

After that purchase, he and his wife, Abbie, and their own young family, were briefly residing within that "tavern", and reportedly also operating it. But, by **'1874'**, obviously he had acquired his parents' (second) home* -- and then, he simply moved his (young, and expanding) family across the road.

(*- His older, half-brother, William, had already acquired the true, original "Benjamin Bacon home" --- which is clearly shown as William's residence, on the above map.)]

So, although the "1880 census" enumerates several, (non-Bacon), 'households' in the vicinity of the mill --- who might, potentially, have been residing in the big "miller's house in the Hollow" --- however, contemporaneous proof about its occupancy at that time, is lacking.

(And unfortunately, the '1890' census was destroyed in a Wash., D.C., fire.**)**

The 'Bacon' family-tradition* indicates that F.H. Bacon had begun to utilize its "office" portion. (Heymann had renovated the "miller's house" during his ownership -- possibly even newly constructing that office-addition.**)**

Therefore, it's conceivable that – at some time during that decade – perhaps part of the F.H. Bacon family briefly moved out of their large "Alva Curtis house" --- into this house, prior to its next sale (in '1895'**).**

[*- "Family-traditions" should never be used as the sole source for 'history', because they are often composed of significant "embellishments" and miscommunications.]

THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE ?

'ELYRIA WEEKLY REPUBLICAN', August 20, 1885

Going For the Commissioners.

BROWNHELM, O., August 17th.

EDITOR REPUBLICAN: Your paper, I believe, is the official paper of our county, and through it we should try to reach our county officials. During the latter part of May the Commissioners repaired the bridge crossing the Vermillion river at Brownhelm Hollow; and before, during and after its reparation made several visits to the bridge, undoubtedly which were essentially necessary. During one of their visits, Mr. Fred Bacon called their attention to some necessary repairs which were needed on the bridge crossing the mill race, not far distant from the bridge crossing the river. They looked at the bridge, and one of them, when asked by Mr. Bacon "what they thought of the bridge," told him that the race was his, and also the bridge. The gentlemen had entered their carriage and started for Swift's Hollow, and were about to cross "Mr. Bacon's bridge," when he conceived a new idea; and that was to collect toll on his newly-granted bridge, and demanded of the Commissioners the sum of one dollar before they crossed. It was reported that the spokesman was convinced, that the bridge was county property, was built by the county, and that the county had better reclaim it if its representatives wished to reach Swift's Hollow that day. A promise was made as the officials crossed it, that some new planks would be laid upon it at no distant day; but that day has not arrived. I have to cross and recross the bridge almost daily; and this afternoon while crossing, my horse got her foot in one of the spaces between the planks, stumbled, broke the harness, and lamed herself. Now, if this should reach the eyes of the Commissioners, I hope they will consider this bridge at their next meeting, and accept Mr. Fred Bacon's proposition to repair it for seventy-five cents, or get a cheaper contractor, if possible. At any rate let the bridge be laid with new plank, and thereby increase the safety of those men and animals that have to cross it.

J. S. BUTLER.

One inference that can be deduced from that editorial, is that all of the prior mill owners, (for more than 50 years), had previously accepted responsibility for their (short) mill-race bridge. (The mill-race was not a natural waterway. **) Which might explain why – even after that confrontation – no repairs had yet begun.** (Maybe there was a follow-up news item about the governmental legalities? Or maybe F.H. Bacon simply accepted his obligations -- the same as all of the previous owners? And then maybe Butler sued Bacon??)

[Typically, "anecdotal" details such as were interspersed in that editorial, are not suitable for inclusion in 'histories'. But because those details were recorded contemporaneously, there is more "weight" to their veracity. (Also, note the use of "*undoubtedly*" as sarcasm --- "*visits*" which were *"undoubtedly"* essentially necessary.)]

A CIRCA-1895 PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE MILL STRUCTURES (as viewed from atop the south hill.)
The short bridge crossing the "mill-race", is just out-of-view at the right-hand side of the photo.
The iron bridge across the Vermilion River, is slightly left-of-center. (The tall structure is the gristmill.
The low, open-ended structure, is the sawmill. The "mill-race" ran between those two structures.)

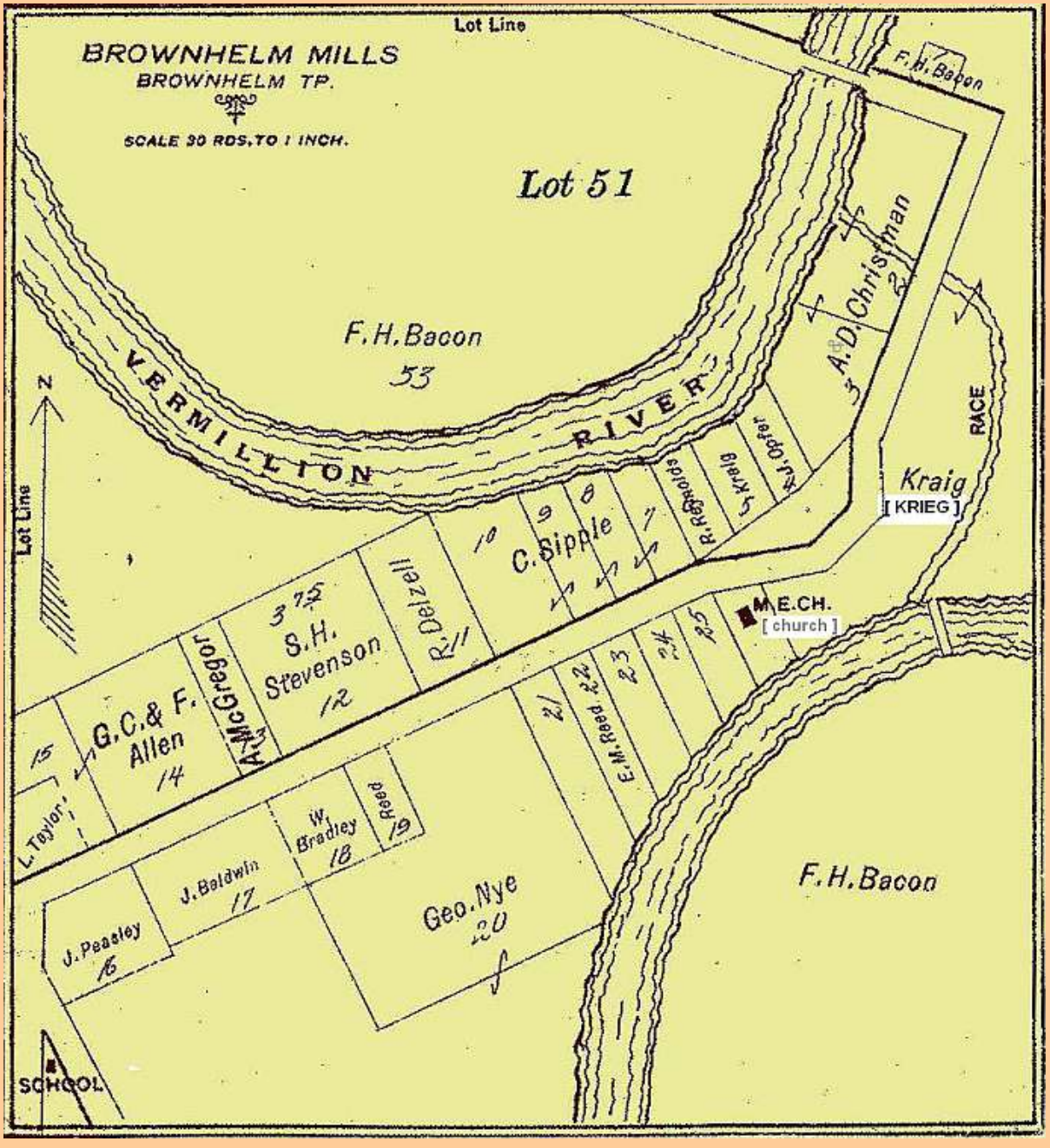
{ from the '1895' book, ' *ART WORK OF LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO* ' , ('*Part 1*'), published by H.W. Kennicott & Co., Chicago }

“Mill Hollow” as viewed from atop the north hill (circa that same time **) :**

The mills are not visible through the trees. But part of 'West Brownhelm' village is visible, (at upper-left).

Note that the “house” visible at far-left, is not the old “miller's house”, but instead is probably the same smaller structure which was denoted on the '1874' map – as being on the “west” side of the roadway, there.

IN '1895', BACON SOLD THE MILLS (AND AN ADJACENT 7 ACRES) TO THE CHRISTMAN BROTHERS.
(This '1896' map shows their ownership of the mill's sub-lots '2' & '3', on that five acres of land) :

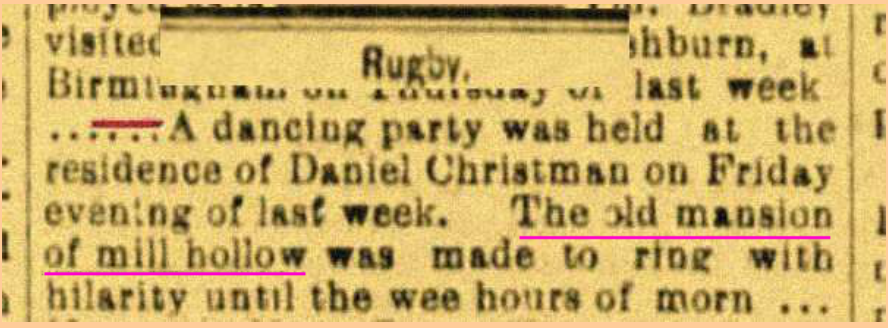


The "Township" map, that same year, ('1896') seems to show the location of their adjacent 7-acres, (plus the 5-acres of sub-lots *'2'* & *'3'* --- therefore being *"**12**"* acres, total**) :**

(Note, that F.H. Bacon continued to own the other properties surrounding that newly-sold 12-acres.)

The two brothers who had purchased the mills -- and the large old "miller's house" -- were Adam T. Christmann (of the Toledo area, where he continued to reside after co-purchasing the mills, here**), and Daniel Christmann (Jr.), who moved into this "*old mansion of Mill Hollow*", shortly after that purchase:**

{ ' *Sandusky Daily Register*', 23 Nov. 1897 }



Rugby.

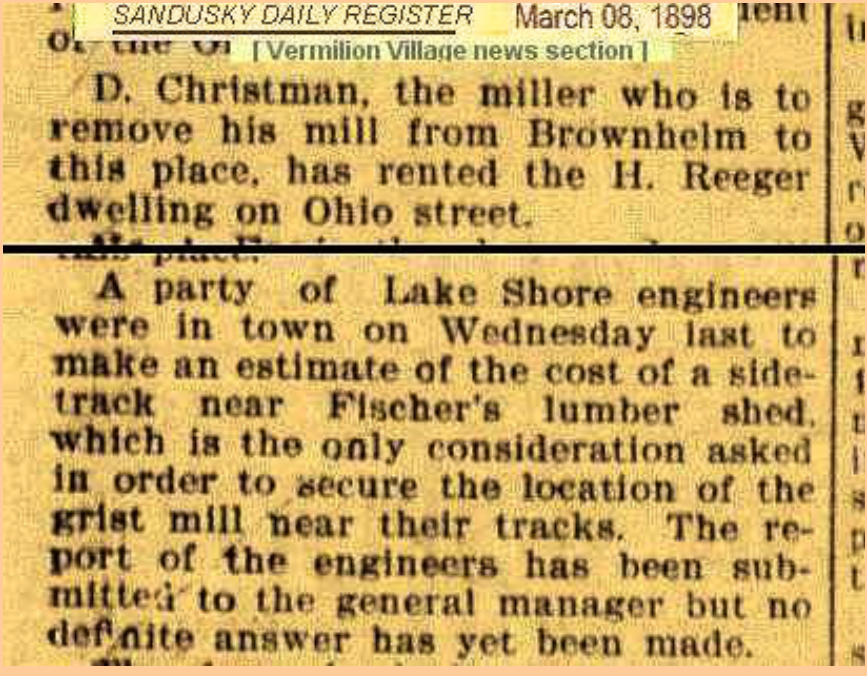
visited ... shburn, at Birmingham on Thursday of last week .....A dancing party was held at the residence of Daniel Christman on Friday evening of last week. The old mansion of mill hollow was made to ring with hilarity until the wee hours of morn ...

('Rugby' had become the name of this village's post-office, that same year.)

[Prior to the Heymann renovation, that structure would have looked merely like a typical large house of that time-period. The Victorian "bay window" front addition to the "office wing", had changed the entire appearance to be more like a "mansion".]

{ Note: the Christmann surname was often casually spelled "Christman".}

However, the milling business, here, must have quickly become very unprofitable, because – by '1898' – they decided to dismantle the gristmill structure -- and re-erect it, in the village of Vermilion :



SANDUSKY DAILY REGISTER March 08, 1898

[Vermilion Village news section]

D. Christman, the miller who is to remove his mill from Brownhelm to this place, has rented the H. Reeger dwelling on Ohio street.

A party of Lake Shore engineers were in town on Wednesday last to make an estimate of the cost of a side-track near Fischer's lumber shed, which is the only consideration asked in order to secure the location of the grist mill near their tracks. The report of the engineers has been submitted to the general manager but no definite answer has yet been made.

[The "Lake Shore" L.S. & M.S. railroad-tracks are the northern tracks, through 'downtown' Vermilion. (The "Nickle Plate", N.Y.C. & ST. L. tracks are on the village's south side, but "crisscross" with L.S., east of the river).]

Sandusky Daily Register, April 12, 1898

RUGBY.

Philip Opperman has moved into the Christman house in mill hollow.

John Stevenson and D. Christman were in Columbus a few days not long since inspecting some machinery made by the Case Manufacturing company, in view of placing the contract for furnishing new machinery and setting up old machinery after the removal of the mill from this place to Vermillion.

This Opperman family continued to reside in the old "miller's house" (as 'renters', from Christmann**), until at least '1900',** (as suggested by the '1900' census of Brownhelm – which lists the household members as being Philip, his wife Mary, and their children, Carl and Alice -- ages 13 and 7).

The 'Elyria Republican' (newspaper) **of Nov. 6, 1902,** (in the *' Rugby '* news section), **says this about the adjacent mill property :**

The old water-wheels and a building which was [all that was] ***left to show the remains of the old Brownhelm mill, is being torn down. J. H. Stevenson, who recently purchased it, is doing the work; and in a short time, there will be nothing left to show that a mill stood there. Brownhelm Mill, which was formerly owned by F.H. Bacon, and which was moved to Vermilion about five years ago by D. & A.T. Christmann, (who now own it), was one of the oldest mills in the Western Reserve.***

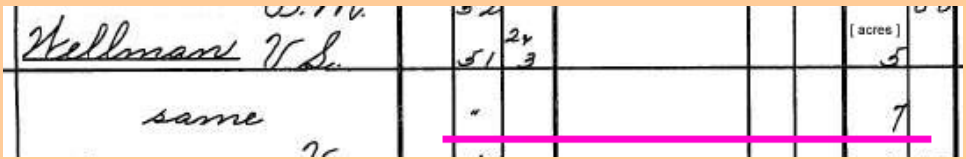
(Obviously that last sentence is not accurately stated. That mill structure had been entirely newly built by Heymann, about a year after the '1876' fire.)

The further ownership of the mill property (sub-lots '2' and '3' **), has not yet been fully researched --- nor the entire 20th-Century history of the old "miller's house" --- and which is beyond the scope of this booklet.**

But here are a few highlights from the first-half of that century :

The following information is tentative. (The actual property-deeds for these specific land-transactions, require further perusal.)

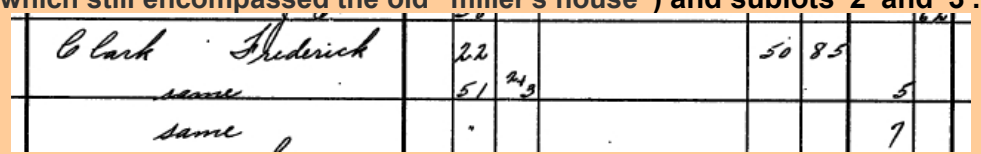
By '1904', <u>Val* S. Wellman</u> had become the owner of the 5-acre sub-lots '2' and '3' and the adjacent 7-acres. [Image is the '1905' tax-dupl.]



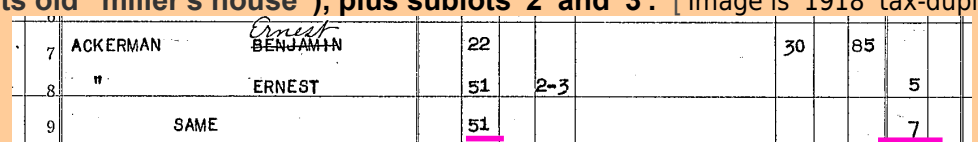
[*- All early records indicate "*Valentine*" -- but his gravestone has "Valdingham". (His 1935 death-certificate denotes his name as merely " *Val Wellman* ".)]

The old "miller's house" was ostensibly still part of that Wellman property, (although it is not yet known if he actually ever resided in that house. But probably instead, 'renters' were again occupying it, at that time).

By '1907', <u>Frederick Clark</u> had acquired the 7-acres (presumably which still encompassed the old "miller's house") and sublots '2' and '3':



In '1915', <u>Ernest Ackerman</u> purchased those 7-acres (and, presumably, its old "miller's house"), plus sublots '2' and '3'. [Image is '1918' tax-dupl.]



This circa-1910 postcard shows the old "miller's house" (as viewed from the north cliff **):**

All of the other buildings that were formerly in "the Hollow", seem to be gone, (except for the large shed and barn, in the foreground of the old "miller's house"). (The barn's roof is barely visible, to the 'left' of the large shed.) The bridge is visible at the 'right'. (It is a later structure, than the bridge in the '1895' photo.**)** **Some of the remnants of the village of "Rugby" are visible in the upper-left side.**

HIDDEN GOLD --- IN "MILL HOLLOW" !

August 9, 1907.

VICINITY LOOKS LIKE GOLD FIELD

Commenting on the recent find of gold at Lorain, C. J. White a minerologist from Danville, Ill., who has had considerable experience in the gold fields of the west as well as with mining in its varied forms, has a theory that gold may be found in an extensive quantity in Lorain county. He has not investigated the lay of the land in the vicinity of the recent findings to the west of the city, but states that gold may be found in paying quantities in most any locality where gravel is located in large quantities.

Mr. White goes back to the glacial periods for his theory. He states that gold has been found in many places where experts had no idea it existed, simply due to the washing across the country of the glaciers at that time and depositing the different minerals. Owing to the fact that the glaciers have left their lasting impress upon many points near the city his theory seems to be correct. The glaciers are said by prominent scientists to have formed the great Mill Hollow to the west of Brownhelm.

In case Mr. White's theory proves correct the gold will be found to be deposited in a "pocket," that is merely a deposit left by the glaciers.

(from the '*Elyria Evening Telegram*')

[Supposedly, gold had also been discovered in Brownhelm's "Shepherd's Creek" --- which may instead be the referenced location, "*west of the city*", in that news.]

Aug. 3, 1916

CLEVELAND MAN IS HURT WHILE COASTING

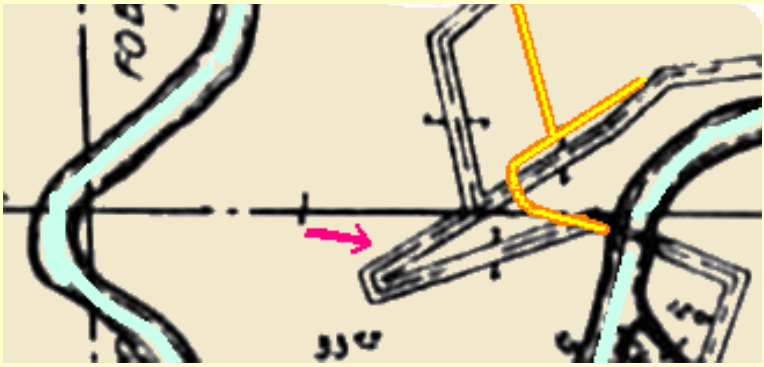
Paul Hoffner, of Cleveland, was painfully injured Sunday while visiting at the home of his grandmother, Mrs. Hoffner, of Brownhelm. Mr. Hoffner was coasting on a bicycle down Mill Hollow Hill when he fell from the wheel. The right side of his face and eye was badly skinned and he was considerably bruised. He had planned to return home but will be unable to go for about ten days.

[*'Amherst Weekly News'* ('Amherst' was the name of that village, by that year.)]

That news item doesn't specify which hill --- the 'north' hill – or the 'south' hill.

At that time, the 'south' hill roadway was, presumably, more steep than the 'north', because the original 'north' hill roadway was located in a different area, than currently.

This '1916' map, shows that the older 'north' hill roadway, actually traversed the hill in a nearly straight manner, until it reached the bottomlands --- and then it turned eastward, and along the bottomlands for quite a distance, to the bridge.



'Yellow' represents the later roadway, during the mid-20th-Century -- but which was again modified slightly, by the end of that Century.
(Part of that original, crude, “north hill road” was still recently viewable at the 'slope' there in the wooded area of that westerly section of the “Hollow”.)

[It is not currently known why that original, long “gradual approach” was changed --- to instead be a much more treacherous “steeper curve”; and which subsequently required additional changes, to be more navigable.]

Perhaps this "revenge" occurred near the remote area at the bottom of that older north-hill roadway :

MAY 9, 1918 The Amherst Times.

TAR AND FEATHER "PARTY" FRIDAY NIGHT

ELYRIA POLICEMAN GIVEN "COAT" FOR STRIKING SOLDIER WITH CLUB.

Captured as He Left Justice Office, Taken to Mill Hollow—Affair Creates Sensation.

Patrolman C. F. Reinke of Elyria was captured by a small-sized mob last Friday evening, taken to Mill Hollow near Brownhelm, and given a coat of tar and feathers. The affair has created a sensation in the town and many comments are heard, most of them to the effect that he got about what he should have.

The immediate cause was his act in striking a soldier who he was arresting. The soldier is said to have been partly intoxicated and after a few words the officer arrested the man and started to take him to the station. The soldier resisted and Reinke hit him with the club, breaking the scalp. He was followed to the station and complaint made by a crowd of citizens. The soldier went to the hospital.

Mayor Jones immediately suspended Reinke pending an investigation. The officer was brought before a justice and arraigned on a charge of assault and battery, the hearing being postponed.

As he left the office and was on the way home, five masked men attired in convict clothes and wearing cowls over their heads rushed out and grabbed him. He put up a fight but was finally landed in an auto, and the machine was driven east. A number of men attempted to follow the first machine but were thrown off the track.

A few hours later the Elyria police received a telephone call that Reinke could be found at Mill Hollow. The Elyria men came to Amherst, got in touch with officials here, and headed for Brownhelm. There are three roads leading to Brownhelm from Mill Hollow, and a machine took to each road. The machine driven by Dr. W. H. Turner picked up the policeman.

It is believed that the first machine was joined by others in Elyria. The man had been taken to the lonely spot, his shirt torn off, and a liberal coat of tar and feathers applied. Then he was left there. It is said the man narrowly escaped hanging, but pled that he was loyal to the country and that a mistake was being made.

The parties who made up the party remain a mystery to the police. They were well organized and worked systematically and quickly. The fact that Reinke is of German parentage did not help matters any. He had been on the police force for years. The moral effect on other men of pro-German inclinations is expected to be great.

Mr. Reinke declares he is a loyal citizen and always has been. He admits he was too hasty with his club.

Many visitors have gone to the scene of the tarring, and report the grass and bushes covered with the remains of the affair.

It is said other members of the Elyria police force have presented their resignations, fearing similar treatment.

[Prejudice against people with *"pro-German inclinations"* intensified during the First-World-War.]

The ownership and occupancy of the old "miller's house" during that time-period, has not presently been fully determined in available public records.

But, by '1930', Claude Unger (and his family) were occupying that house; and he installed the *"Mill Hollow Miniature Golf Course"* on that property --- afterward named "*Mill Hollow Gardens*", (with a "rustic" "open-air dance hall" – perhaps later enclosed, for wintertime). (Confirmed by published memoirs written by his nephew, Maynard Unger --- and also in these ' *Amherst News-Times* ' items.)

Sept. 18, 1930

OPENS GOLF COURSE

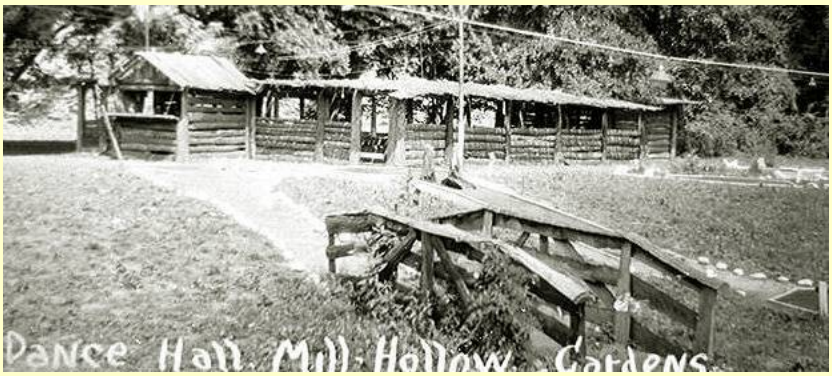
Mill Hollow Miniature Golf Course, owned by Claude Unger, was opened last Sunday by Mayor C. E. Cooper and Miss Valerie Eppley. The course has been constructed with a rustic atmosphere in mind, and a log cabin has been built for the office and lunch stand. A large crowd was present at the opening.

Aug. 20, 1931

OLD FASHIONED DANCE

An old fashioned dance is scheduled for this evening at the Mill Hollow Gardens, with Hayes' Old Timers furnishing the music. Claude Unger announced today that he is soon to put up an enclosed dance hall, 38x75, for dancing this winter.

The members of the Elyria Kiwanis Club are holding their picnic at Mill Hollow this evening.



But, there were still "Bacons" at the <u>top of the hill</u> :

THE AMHERST NEWS-TIMES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1944

Brownhelm Lady Was Buried Today

["Sadie"] [b. 1864]

Miss Sarah H. Bacon, 80, died in her home at Mill Hollow at 8 p. m. Sunday after an illness of six months.

Four years ago she broke her hip, an injury from which she never recovered. Miss Bacon who celebrated her 80th birthday last Thursday was the daughter of Frederick Bacon owner of the flour mill in Mill Hollow many years ago, and also operated the inn at the top of the hill opposite the family residence. Each week in the "horse and buggy days" she drove to Elyria to take care of her father's business interests.

She died in the house where she was born.

Besides a brother Charles, living in the home, she leaves two nephews, Donald and Clayton Winters both of Warren Point, New Jersey.

[In that first sentence, "***her home at Mill Hollow***" is a bit misleading. Their "***family residence***", as it specifies, was "***at the top of the hill***".]

Here are photos of those two residences of the F.H. Bacon family:

The 'remains' of the (very large) "ALVA CURTIS HOUSE"

[It had probably been constructed in the year '1831' (as suggested by '1832' tax records).]

That was the "F.H. Bacon" family-residence, from about '1874' to '1957'.

(And the home of F.H. and his parents, Benjamin and Ann, beginning about '1857'.

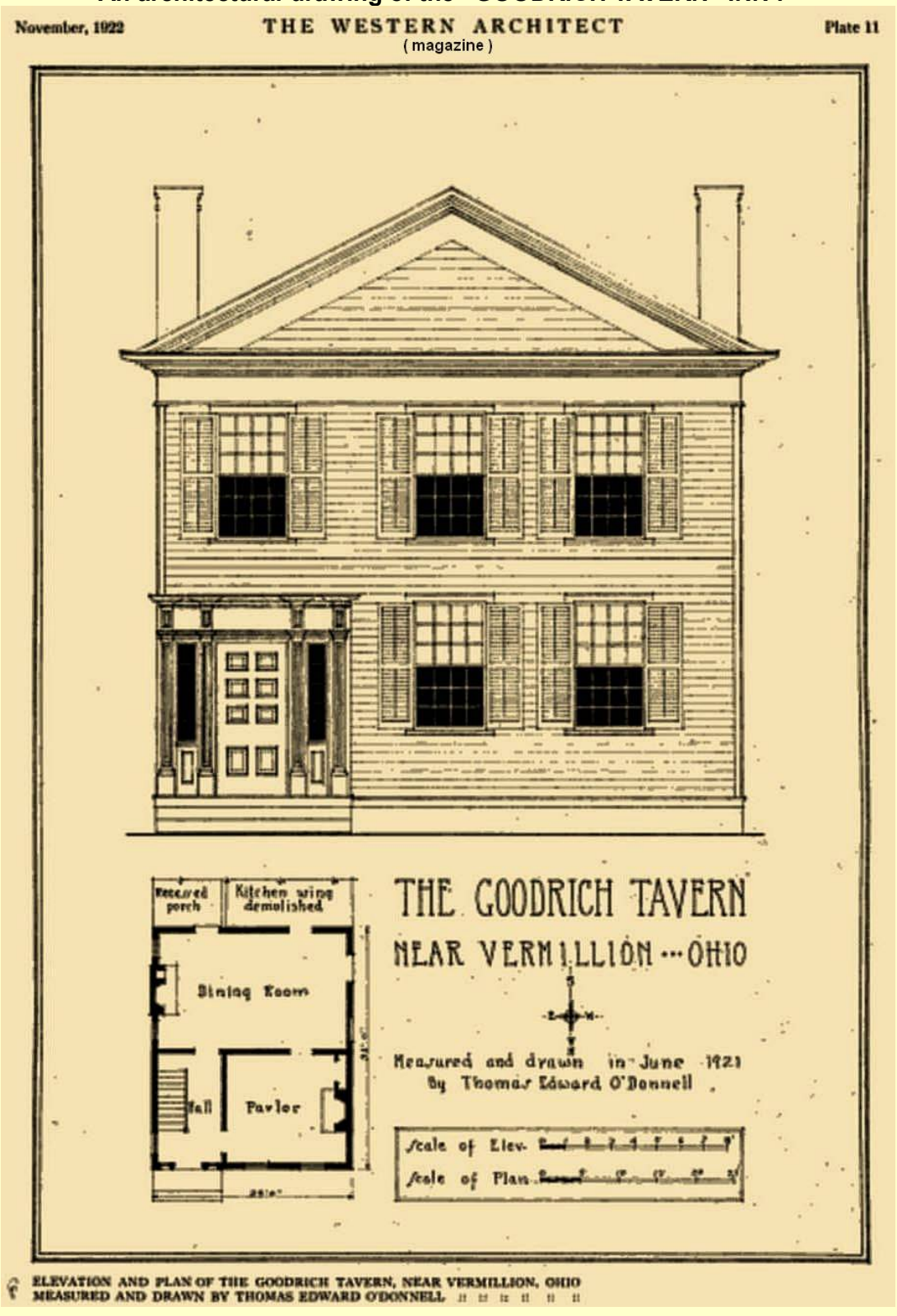
It was the home that Sarah Bacon was born within (in '1864') -- and died within.)

The 'remains' of the "GOODRICH TAVERN" INN, (circa '1922')

Tax records suggest that it may have been constructed for Goodrich, in the year '1834'.

(From about '1867' to '1873', that was the home of the F.H. Bacon family.)

An architectural-drawing of the "GOODRICH TAVERN" INN :



[Notice that the exterior of that structure is almost identical to the main portion of the "miller's house" – except for the decorative 'lintel' over their front-doors. That similarity suggests that the "miller's house" was built at approximately the same time as this "Goodrich Tavern" (which was constructed circa-1834). In which case, the "miller's house" would not have been originally constructed for "Benjamin Bacon", but instead for one of the mill owner's during the 1830s; perhaps for Job Smith (who seems to have owned these mills, from 1832-1838).]

{ See an additional possibility for original ownership of the "miller's house", on the next page.}

An "odd" series of events began in '1947', involving most of this 'Mill Hollow' property, (and which, somehow, inevitably included the old "miller's house").

Charles W. Bacon, (the son of Frederick H. Bacon), was the last surviving local member of the family of F.H. Bacon. [The two grandsons of Frederick Bacon -- Donald and Clayton Winters – had always resided in New Jersey.]

But there was a complicated 'legal' dilemma with nearly the entire "F.H. Bacon farm": Charles was (apparently) never its sole "legal owner".

("F.H." died in '1901' – however, his real-estate remained in his own name, for at least a decade after his death. But – presumably – Charles inherited the F.H. Bacon farm, as a "co-owner" – along with all the other heirs of F.H.)

In '1947', Charles finally decided that he should be granted its "sole ownership" --- and he began legal-proceedings to accomplish that goal.

Ostensibly, he ultimately succeeded --- because, when Charles died, he is said to have bequeathed "Mill Hollow", to one of his "Bacon cousins", (who, additionally, was the granddaughter of John K. and Margaret Hawley; and, thereby, being an aunt of Burt Shotton/Shotten, the pro-baseball player).

Afterward, (almost instantaneously) that same Bacon-and-Hawley "cousin" is said to have donated this entire real-estate, to the ("coincidentally") newly-formed Lorain County Metroparks.

Some of those seemingly mysterious events can perhaps be explained through more research. BUT, ONE THING IS CERTAIN : THE 'HISTORY' OF *"BROWN'S MILLS"*, ETC. --- AND THE TRUE ORIGIN AND OCCUPANCY OF THE "MILLER'S HOUSE" --- HAS PREVIOUSLY NEVER BEEN ACCURATELY TOLD.

So – originally – whose house was this, really?

IF it was truly built "circa-1845" (as supposed) -- it was the " Bacon & Hawley House" (occupied by Hawley). But – if it was actually instead built somewhat earlier, ca.1834, (which could explain why its main section is nearly identical to the "Goodrich Tavern") – then it was, potentially, the "Job Smith House" originally.

(But, Ezekiel Goodrich – original owner of the "Goodrich Tavern" – was additionally being taxed, in '1837', for a house within this same "Twp. Lot 51". Was it this house? Was this house perhaps one of several Goodrich properties, here near the mills?)

Maybe further evidence will surface, that will verify one of the above.

But, its current, commonly-accepted attribution, as the "*Benjamin Bacon House*" was apparently not based upon any affirmed contemporaneous documentation.

This publication is "public-domain" (and is freely available on 'Archive.org'), but please properly reference and credit it, when utilizing any of its content.

--- 'Dedicated' to Mr. John Hettel (1940-2004) ---
the 'founder' (and "president") of the **Brownhelm Historical Society*.*

[* - not to be confused with the (later) ' Brownhelm Historical Association '.
(*Whenever a ' history' blatantly commences with "rich" hyperbole – will it undoubtedly be enhanced with "rich" untruths, within it?*)]